

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-13 and 15-27 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 14 is canceled and claim 15 is amended. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Office Action's indication that claims 1-13 and 16-27 are allowable.

The Office Action rejects claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-8-124843A to Saeki et al. (hereinafter "Saeki"); and under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,900,707 to Wakui (hereinafter "Wakui"). Claim 14 has been canceled. The rejections are traversed with regard to claim 15.

Neither Saeki nor Wakui teach or suggest all the features recited in independent claim 15.

Saeki discloses an exposure apparatus (as shown in Fig. 1) including an acceleration sensor 21 for measuring acceleration of a stage holder 4 and an assisting driver 22 for providing a mask stage 2A acceleration nearly equal to the measured acceleration to correct a relative positional misalignment between a mask 2 and a sensitive substrate 3 caused by an inertial force provided to the mask stage 2A when the stage holder is accelerated by a driver 5.

Wakui discloses a scan-projection type exposure apparatus which performs a master-slave control with a wafer stage as the master and the reticle stage as the slave. The master-slave control corrects a target value of a position control system of a rough-motion stage 9 or a reticle stage 4 by using motion-mode errors in a one-to-one correspondence with a disturbance occurring to the rough-motion stage of the wafer stage due to motion of a fine-motion stage of the wafer stage.

Neither Saeki nor Wakui teach or suggest determining information relating to an offset, in the predetermined plane, of the mask on the stage caused by movement of the stage based on the detected information and information showing the relationship between the acceleration of the stage and the offset of the mask, as set forth in claim 15.

Furthermore, neither Saeki nor Wakui teach or suggest adjusting a relative positional relationship between the mask and the substrate based on the determined information so as to compensate the offset of the mask on the stage and performing at least one of an operation for recovery from exposure error and notification of the exposure error when judging based on the determined information, that the exposure error occurs due to said offset, as set forth in claim 15.

For at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Saeki nor Wakui anticipate the subject matter of independent claim 15. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-13 and 15-27 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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